

Herndon

# The CIA: Book Editing Division

STATINTL

Writers working on projects that might offend the government have been warned to be wary of having Harper & Row as a publisher. The warning has been given by the present management of that very publishing house.

✓ Alfred W. McCoy, a Ph.D. candidate in Southeast Asian history at Yale, spent 18 months investigating narcotics operations in Southeast Asia. The resultant book, commissioned by Harper & Row, had been thoroughly examined by attorneys for the publishing house. But then, the CIA asked Harper & Row for permission to review McCoy's book, "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia," prior to publication.

Despite the lessons of the battle to publish the Pentagon Papers, despite the continuing travail of Beacon Press (publishers of the Gravel edition of the Pentagon Papers), despite the First Amendment, Harper & Row acceded to the CIA's request! ✓ Seymour Hersh, the most valu-

able addition to the Times-Washington bureau in my memory, dug out the story as part of a continuing investigative account of the increasing quantity of heroin coming into this country from Southeast Asia. As Hersh points out (Times, July 22), the CIA's interest in Alfred McCoy's book is due to McCoy's allegations, that "both CIA and State Department officials have provided political and military support for America's Indochinese allies actively engaged in the drug traffic; have consciously covered up evidence of such involvement; and have been actively involved themselves in the narcotics trade." The CIA, understandably exacerbated—all the more so because Mr. McCoy has been tes-

tifying before Congressional committees—put pressure on Harper & Row. The CIA did not try seriously to claim that national security is involved. The agency impugns the accuracy of the book and wanted to see it before publication in an attempt to persuade the publisher to make "corrections" so the CIA and other American agencies won't look so bad. (The First Amendment stands even if the CIA had insisted that national security might have been breached, but Harper & Row yielded on a much softer point. That's what is so appallingly surprising after all we have learned from the Nixon administration concerning its intentions with regard to the First Amendment.)

Seymour Hersh quotes B. Brooks Thomas, vice-president and general counsel of Harper & Row, as having no doubts about the book: ("We've had it reviewed by others and we're persuaded that the work is amply documented and scholarly.") Nonetheless, Mr. Thomas adds: "We're taking a responsible middle position. I just believe that the CIA should have the chance to review it."

According to Hersh, the book's author, Alfred McCoy, was given the choice of agreeing with Mr. Thomas's "responsible middle position" or not having his book published by Harper & Row.

Brooks Thomas tells me that's not accurate. An either/or situation, he says, did not develop.

"If McCoy had refused to allow the page proofs to be seen by the CIA," prior to publication I asked Thomas, "would you have published the book?"

"I don't know what we would have done," Thomas answered. "In any case, we persuaded McCoy to let the CIA see it." (My information is that Harper & Row would not have published the book if McCoy had resisted prior viewing by the CIA.)

I am sorry that Mr. McCoy allowed himself to be persuaded. At first, Hersh writes, McCoy refused to go along, but "changed his mind during protracted negotiations."

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